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The audience accepted it with that constrained courtesy which well-bred people show to all friends, even when they happen to come at the most inopportune moments. The attendance was very large. Sir Michael Costa conducted.

THE ORATORIO CONCERTS.

THE fifth Concert of the series was given at St. James's Hall on the 12th ult., when Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* were performed—two works expressing the deepest religious feeling, but as widely different in that expression as were the natures of the two composers who wrote them. The principal vocalists in the *Lobgesang* were Madame Rudersdorff, Mrs. Sidney Smith and Mr. W. H. Cummings, who supplied the place of Mr. Sims Reeves, absent from indisposition. The orchestral movements of the *Lobgesang* were exceedingly well played, although some of the stringed instruments do not yet appear to be perfectly under control with the lowered pitch. Madame Rudersdorff sang with her usual earnestness, and was especially effective in all the parts lying comfortably within the range of her voice; Mrs. Sidney Smith, in the duet, with Madame Rudersdorff, "I waited for the Lord," showed a carefully cultivated style, and a commendable unobtrusiveness which will always ensure her the good opinion of her hearers, and Mr. Cummings fairly surpassed himself in his delivery of the whole of the tenor music, the important bits of Recitative embracing the well-known "Watchman, will the night soon pass?" being given with an artistic feeling and perfection of intonation which created a marked effect upon the audience. The whole of the difficult choruses were sung with remarkable precision and vigour, the tone of the choir being more perfectly balanced than we remember to have observed on any former occasion. Had Mr. Barnby not resolutely made up his mind to resist encores (a resolution for which we heartily thank him), the beautiful Chorale, "Let all men praise the Lord," would assuredly have been heard a second time, for the execution of it was as near perfection as possible. In the *Stabat Mater* Herr Stepan, who sang the exacting bass part, proved himself a genuine artist, not only the popular "Pro peccatis" being sung in faultless style, but the difficult "Eia Mater," in which the intonation of the most experienced singer is severely taxed, being rendered throughout with such accuracy and intensity of feeling as to charm all musical ears. An apology having been made for Mdlle. Drasdil, the contralto part was sung by Mdlle. Scaldi, so admirably as to elicit the enthusiastic applause of the whole audience. The fine air, "Fac ut portem," brought out her rich voice with the utmost effect; and after the duet with Madame Rudersdorff, "Quis est homo," there was an evident desire for an encore, which it required all Mr. Barnby's fortitude to withstand. Madame Rudersdorff, in the "Inflammatum," and Mr. Cummings in "Cujus animam," evoked the heartiest applause; and the chromatic unaccompanied quartet, "Quando corpus," was so well sung as almost to reconcile us to the music. Again, the choir in the somewhat thankless intricacies of Rossini's "fine writing," proved itself thoroughly competent to the task. Even the final "fugue" was sung with all the earnestness which was bestowed on Mendelssohn's "Chorale;" and in the "Eia Mater" (which, as far as we recollect, was done, for the first time, without the slightest accompaniment), the chorus was given with an accuracy of intonation deserving the highest praise, the pitch at the conclusion not having fallen a hair's breadth. Mr. Joseph Barnby, as usual, conducted; and kept both orchestra and choir well under command.

MISS AGNES ZIMMERMANN'S CONCERT.

THE third and last of these Concerts was given at the Hanover Square Rooms, on the 11th ult., when Miss Zimmermann again proved her right to be ranked in the first class of intellectual pianists, playing through a programme

of the most exacting works with an intelligent appreciation of her author's meaning, and an executive power which cannot be too highly praised. The selection included Beethoven's Trio in C minor, for pianoforte, violin, and violoncello; Mendelssohn's Duo, for pianoforte and violoncello (Op 58), and three "Pensées Fugitives," for pianoforte and violin, by Heller and Ernst. In the performance of these compositions Miss Zimmermann had the valuable co-operation of Mr. Henry Holmes and Signor Piatti. The one solo chosen by the Concert-giver on this occasion was Schumann's Sonata in G minor (Op 22), the difficulties of which she surmounted with the utmost ease; and, indeed, we may say that we have rarely heard Schumann's music rendered so intelligible to an audience, the interpretation of the work being obviously not only a labour of love, but the result of careful and earnest study. The solo vocalist was Madame Lemmens-Sherrington who sang a graceful song, by Miss Zimmermann, called "Oh! that we two were Maying" (encored), and a trifling ballad by Molloy, which should never have had a place in a concert of this pretension. Several part-songs were excellently given by Mr. Barnby's choir, and received with the utmost favour.

MR. HENRY LESLIE'S CONCERT.

THE last Subscription Concert of the season took place on the 6th ult. A good selection of part-music was sung by the choir with that perfection to which Mr. Leslie has now accustomed his audience; and amongst the rest the Concert-giver's Prize Madrigal, "Thine eyes so bright," which received, as it deserved, the most enthusiastic applause. Mr. Sims Reeves, who was to have sung a number of his most popular songs, was ill; and Mr. Vernon Rigby, who was sent for, was not forthcoming; so that Mr. Massey (a member of the choir) had an opportunity of singing "The Village Blacksmith," which pleased so much that he was encored. Miss Edith Wynne and Miss Elena Angèle also contributed some songs which were highly successful; and the Quartet Glee Union sang some glees with much effect. The instrumentalists were Mr. Blagrove (violin), Mr. Brinley Richards (pianoforte), and Mr. De Jongh (flute); Mr. Blagrove and Mr. Brinley Richards played Beethoven's Sonata in F (Op. 24), which was much applauded, and Mr. Richards performed a brilliant arrangement of his own on "Weber's Last Waltz." The Concert was well attended.

ROSSINI'S MESSE SOLENNELLE.

THIS work has at length been brought to judgment in England, and what that judgment will be there can be little doubt, from the warmth of its reception by a proverbially cold morning audience at St. James's Hall, on the 19th ult. It is so much the fashion in the present day for critics to be told by other critics what they are to say, that we almost despair of being believed when we record the effect of Rossini's gorgeous Mass upon ourselves, shutting out, as jurymen are told to do, all outside influences, and listening to the music with the simple desire of understanding it, and, if possible, of enjoying it. Let us at once say then that, in our opinion, the composer has fully achieved his object, if we may hazard a conjecture as to what that object was. Gifted with a rich vein of melody, Rossini has now twice attempted to write a sacred work, in which those charmingly tuneful phrases which seize upon every ear shall predominate, and effectually disarm the cold and unsympathetic cavillers who will insist upon it that religious music should be religious. The *Stabat Mater* has made its way into public favour, and will keep there, by force of its delicious melodies and exquisite vocal effects: that the new Mass will be equally well received we also believe, but not from the same reasons. Conscious of his want of power to produce melody as attractive as he has already given to the world, the composer has fallen back upon a style which has helped many inferior writers through a dreary task; and in attempting to follow in the

footsteps of those who have thrown their genius into sacred music, has succeeded in imitating the forms so closely that few but stern and unmoved critics will remain unsatisfied. In proof of our assertion that Rossini has achieved his object in writing the Mass, let us point to the chorus, "Cum sancto spiritu," which created so powerful an effect that it was unanimously encored; yet that it is a fugue worthy of a great master we unhesitatingly deny. Again, beautiful as are portions of the "Credo," it is difficult indeed to feel that the composer had any definite plan in writing it, so scattered are the ideas, and so restless are the changes of key; and yet that it pleased the audience the applause abundantly testified, and that it will continue to be so applauded whenever the work is heard in the concert-room we have not the slightest reason to doubt. Turning from these portions where, as we have indicated, Rossini has been scarcely true to himself, we have much to praise in the purely melodious movements, although all the vocal solos are inferior to those in the *Stabat Mater*. The "Domine Deus," for tenor, and "Quoniam tu solus," for bass, remind us of the "Cujus animam" and "Pro peccatis" in the *Stabat*; but we can scarcely believe that they will ever obtain the same world-wide popularity. By far a better solo than either of these is the "Crucifixus," a pure and smoothly written melody for soprano, which received, as it deserved, a spontaneous encore, a compliment due alike to the composition and its exquisite interpretation by Mdlle. Tietjens. In spite of all those grand orchestral and choral effects upon which no doubt the composer has mainly relied for success, in our opinion the most beautiful, spontaneous, and devotional movement of the Mass is the "Agnus Dei," a contralto solo, with occasional phrases of unaccompanied chorus, the effect of which, after the noise to which our ears had been so long subjected, was most grateful. The principal singers were Mdlle. Tietjens, Mdlle. Scalchi, Signor Mongini, and Mr. Santley, all of whom sang their very best throughout this arduous work. The band and chorus were from the Royal Italian Opera; and, although Signor Araitì strove manfully to control their violence, no person engaged in either department could be truthfully accused of not being heard. We look forward with pleasure to a performance of this Mass with a choral force accustomed to observe the gradations of tone, without which sacred music can never impress an audience with feelings of devotion.

PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

THE revival of Mr. Cipriani Potter's Symphony in D, at the fourth Concert of this Society, should not be regarded as a mere compliment to its accomplished composer. Such genuine, healthy music as this has a right to its place in the programmes of an Institution professedly formed to encourage and exhibit talent wherever it can be found; and we trust that the ice being fairly broken, whether the "music of the future" be accepted or not in the present day, such works as this of Mr. Potter's may at all events not be branded as "music of the past." We are glad to record that every movement of this fine Symphony was listened to with the utmost pleasure; and that at its conclusion Mr. Potter was summoned before the audience, and greeted with applause as warm and enthusiastic as it was richly deserved. At the fifth Concert, two new appearances have to be noticed. The first, Madame Norman-Neruda, is a violinist of such extraordinary talent as to require no qualification in our remarks on account of her sex. An *Adagio* and showy *Rondo*, from Vieuxtemps' Concerto in E, were admirably suited to display both her tone and execution to the utmost advantage; and rarely indeed have we heard a more exquisite performance, or witnessed a more genuine success. The audience seemed never tired of applauding her; and we believe would have readily listened to both the movements again, had she been willing to comply with so unreasonable a desire. The second *débütante* was Madame Monbelli, who sang Rossini's "Una Voce," with such finish, grace, and truth of intonation as to charm every

hearer, and to elicit the most hearty applause; a spontaneous expression of feeling which must have been doubly welcome to the new-comer, as she was unheralded by any laudatory preliminary announcements. Miss Agnes Zimmermann's excellent and truly artistic performance of Dr. Bennett's Pianoforte Caprice in E, was also a most attractive feature in this Concert.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF MUSICIANS.

THE Annual performance of the *Messiah* took place at St. James's Hall, on the 7th ult. Professor Sterndale Bennett was unfortunately prevented, by indisposition, from conducting the Oratorio; and his place was most ably supplied by Mr. W. G. Cusins. The solo vocalists were Madame Lemmens-Sherrington, Miss Edith Wynne, Miss Jewell, Madame Sainton-Dolby, Madame Osborne Williams, Mr. Cummings, Mr. Winn and Mr. Lewis Thomas. There was an excellent chorus and orchestra; and the execution of the work was in the highest degree satisfactory.

WE understand that Mr. Charles E. Stephens has resigned the organistship of St. Clement Danes, the stipend having, in consequence of the abolition of Church-rates, been reduced from £75 to £50 per annum. The retirement of so able and experienced an organist from an office which he has held since April, 1864, affords one more proof of the unsatisfactory manner in which those who fill so responsible a position are remunerated.

MR. W. Reeves (organist of all Saints' Church, Mile End New Town) gave his fifth evening Concert at Dunn's Lecture Hall, Newington Causeway, on Tuesday, April 27th. The principal vocalists were, Miss Walton, Miss Jackson, Mr. Charlier, Mr. Hulford, Mr. Bunker, and Mr. Applegaith. The instrumentalists were Mr. Dimmock Hill (clarinet), Mr. J. Baldock, Mr. Harler, and Master Applegaith (pianoforte). Mr. F. A. Bridge kindly conducted, in the place of Mr. W. Reeves, who was absent through severe indisposition. The Concert was well attended.

THE West London Sacred Choral Society brought its season to a close, by holding the sixth of a series of public rehearsals, at 71, Welbeck Street, on Friday evening, the 30th of April. The work selected was Mendelssohn's *Eljäh*, the soloists being Miss Marie Stocken, Miss Julia Derby, Mr. Albert James, and Mr. W. Lloyd Owen, the latter gentleman undertaking the bass part at a moment's notice, owing to the illness of Mr. D. Newton. The band and chorus consisted of about eighty performers, under the direction of Mr. H. C. Freeman.

AN evening Concert took place at Albion Hall, London Wall, on Thursday, the 13th ult. The programme was an excellent one. Several part-songs and choruses were rendered with much effect by the choir; and Miss Abbott displayed considerable taste in her vocal solos. The Concert was under the direction of Mr. A. J. Lo-Presti, who conducted with much efficiency.

A CONCERT of vocal music was given by the members of the Singing Class of the St. James's National School, Curtain Road, Shoreditch, (under the direction of Mr. Charles J. Robinson), on the 8th ult; Mr. James Miller, B.A., organist and director of the choir of St. Stephen, Commercial Street, accompanying on the pianoforte. The principal vocalists were Miss L. Parish, Miss Melsom, Mr. George Reeves, and Mr. A. J. Hubbard. Among the choral pieces most worthy of notice were Arthur Sullivan's "Hush thee, my babe," Müller's "Spring's delights," and J. L. Hatton's part-songs, "Beware," and "Since first I saw your face." Several vocal solos were also given with much effect; and Miss Alice McDonough (eight years of age) gave a performance on the pianoforte, which was much admired. At the close of the Concert the Rev. Turberville Evans, B.A., vicar, complimented